



DESIGN AS ANANDA



Indian artists, as opposed to the Western task of representation , conceptual enframing and questioning, often took up their task as the task of *enlightenment* of the audience through the feeling of *Ananda*.

Ananda is roughly translated to bliss, but the idea encompasses so much more. Artists are the projectors of Maya, the Indian word for illusion. Namely, their task is to project such as immersive idea of spiritual beauty that the audience realizes their connection to Universe as a part of it, thereby transcending their selfish egocentric nature.

This is often done through evoking the *Sublime*. Sublime, as described by Burke, is that massive sense of awe and wonder invoked by the immersive reality of sights such as the night sky.

Self
Transcendence



Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a pyramid of requirements that individuals need for self growth as humans. The bottom ones are the base needs, while the top ones are higher needs.

Transcendence was actually the last need that Maslow wrote of before his death, claiming to be at the top of his pyramid

Self-transcendence is not the only spiritual sounding need that human society is in dire supply of.

Technological progress led by the bastion of Silicon valley has now pushed for “disruption” as status quo, regardless of what those disruptions may achieve.

These disruptions have often harmed our daily rituals , creating a sense of imbalance and loss of personal meaning.

While Ritualistic design (By Ozenc and Hagan) aims to solve this via secularized methodology, it's increasingly clear that modernity's opposition to religion has deprived it of understanding that religious ritual has not only kept communities together, but has also played a huge role in the development of art, science and technology throughout history.

“I love the process of unpacking something. You design a ritual of unpacking to make the product feel special. Packaging can be theatre, it can create a story.”

-Jony Ive, on designing the Iphone box

Mythic narratives have often subtly shaped the values and traditions of civilizations, giving rise to value systems, philosophies and entire cultures etc. When it comes to sustainability, in addition to data, new materials and activism, we also need the rise of new regenerative cultural paradigm shifts.

Interestingly, new media theorists like Joseph Nechvatal have proposed that it's actually immersive media that not only has the potential to create sublime spiritual experiences via simulation, but it also has the power to construct new myths through the power of immersive narratives (as evidenced by the power of both internet and videogame cultures).

Through practices like Science fiction prototyping (derived from speculative design) applied to XR, Design, may need be “Ananda” to construct self transcending cultures.



Videogames like “journey” and immersive experiences like the Las Vegas Sphere have both been decribed as “spiritual” in nature, and have the ability to create new real-world cultures (Fandoms).

Channeling elements of religion, mythmaking and ritual may be necessary to transcend new horizons in social, behavioural, narrative and systemic design in order to effect true civilizational change,

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